

Policy Advocacy Training

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**PUBLIC POLICY AND
POWER**

PUBLIC POLICY AND POWER

- Public policies are generated by the power of political actors
- For a governmental actor, Minister or public servant, public policies generally refer to specific action having an official character, expressed as policy statements, programs or projects, aimed at solving a problem or at fostering progress in a society.
- For the analyst, the definition encompasses anything a government does or does not do as much whatever circumscribes, influences or defines the action itself.
- Policy can be defined as an expression of dominant power relations/interests within a given society.

PUBLIC POLICY AND POWER

- Public policies are broad statements and regulations that set out broad goals that affect the public
- Public policy advocacy is an exercise in contesting state priorities and resources by laying claims based on clear justifications.
- Public policies fit in a conceptual framework which includes an environment – where it takes place – activities – what – specific purposes - why – structures – what channels – an evolution – how.

The critical path and study process of public policies

Concepts	Definition	Explanations
Activity	Public policies are made of activities	Rational action – up to a point
Purpose	Aimed at resolving	Beliefs, references, traditions
Environment	Problems of a public character or nature in the environment	Policy determinants
Structure	By political actors whose set of relationships are structured and institutionalised	Networks and communities of political actors
Evolution	In a context which changes over time, according the evolving public policy process – emerging issue, formulation, adoption, implementation, evaluation, conclusion.	Stages in public policies

Process

- Public policy is an attempt to bridge a gap between a situation and a norm – norms differ, perceptions of situations differ, actors differ – hence the whole problem of regulating public policies.
- The implementation process of public policies follows, in principle, a series of official procedures but, quite often, crisis situations alter profoundly the order of the stages in public policy making – when they don't annul these outright.

Process

- Resources or instruments in the hands of decision-makers are numerous – norms, positions, authorities, links & linkages, material means, personnel, information.
- Public policy is an essential form of exercise or expression of power, i.e. the control over decisions impacting on stakes.

Flows

- Public policies result from three flows – problems (concept of definition), solutions (concept of tool or instrument) and political choices (trends and networks).
- Power relations between stakeholders define the nature of the interactions between the flows and determine the success or the failure of a public policy. Any group of two flows together does not suffice to generate a public policy.
- Indeed, there can be problems for which there are solutions but the policy of the day is not conducive.

Flows

- The existence of solutions when the political trends are favourable is conducive to the formulation of public policies aimed at resolving a problem.
- Actors : - elected politicians and their entourage; public servants; experts, media, the man in the street.

Rules

- Rules are directives accepted by those living under these; these directives can be implemented, they are subject to controls and to sanctions in case of failure to submit to them.
- The State, from which rules stem, enjoyed a relative autonomy up to recently in terms of its relationship with Society in view of the close links between the political decision making power and the implementation power of the bureaucracy.
- But the evolution of the international environment has weakened the State at a time when the emergence of an Information Society has transformed the citizen into a more mobilized and more active actor.

Rules

- Networks and communities have considerably increased their influence and their power as a channel of transmission

Relationships between rules and public policies

Institutional level	Management level	Technical level
Rules between the political system and the environment	Internal rules of the state apparatus	Rules pertaining to the production of public policies
Institutionalisation of rules	Evolution towards the formalization of rules along the decision making path - emergence of the issue or problem, formulation, implementation	Official rules in terms of resources and unofficial rules in terms of norms, links and information

How public policies emerge

- A public policy emerges when a question is put on the government's agenda.
- To go beyond this stage, there must be, right from the beginning, potential solutions and, more importantly, a political will to choose one.
- There must be stakeholders interested in pursuing the debate. .

Flows, participation, means

Flows	Participation	Means
Problem + political will = emergence Beyond emergence : achievable solutions	Stakeholders and responsible individuals	Norms and statutes

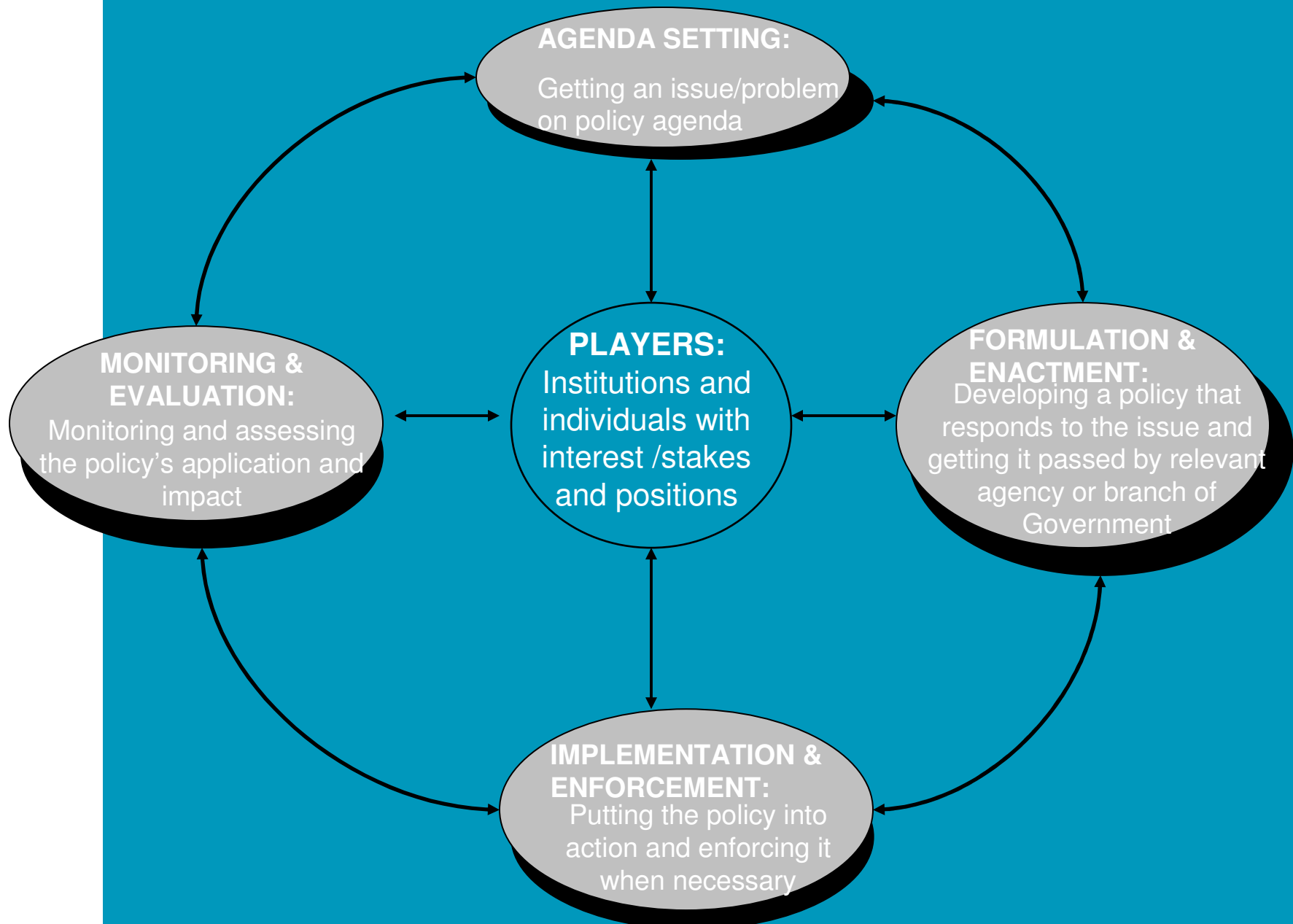
Flows

- Policy making systems help establish the rules that govern states and societies and are made up of institutions and people with different understandings of their society's problems and different stakes in the policies that address them.
- Changing and dynamic, these systems vary from country to country. Each operates in a particular political and cultural context with differing characteristics and players.

Flows

- Public policy process involves a combination of stages that include:
- agenda setting;
- formulation and enactment;
- implementation and enforcement, and
- monitoring and evaluation

Phases and Players in Public Policy-Making Process



Public policy formulation

- Formulation = coupling between political will (power flow) and Solution flow
- Important role of agents – bureaucrats, technicians, particularly when they form alliances between themselves
- Decisive role of the responsible people, leaders: non policies without a political decision

Flows, participation, means

Flows	Participation	Means
Problem + solutions : formulation and possible adoption of the suggested policy	Mainly agents and responsible decision makers	Norms and statutes Information Interpersonal relationships

Implementation of public policies

- From the adoption of a public policy to its implementation, there is often a wide gap or a circular flow between emergence, formulation, and implementation
- Implementation = problem flow + solution flow
- Much more critical role of individuals in the implementation has, particularly if they combine to become real stakeholders groups
- Implementing agencies have a more important role than decision makers unless there are failures or a change in direction demanding a political decision

Flows, participation, means

Flows	Participation	Means
Problem + solutions + frequent reformulation with recurrent insertion of the political flow	Individuals, groups, Agents and background role of decision makers	Norms and statutes Command and control levers (authority) and support

Public policy formulation in trying times: globalization

- Impacts of globalization include
- information revolution, world economic culture, technological competition
- competing value systems and questions regarding civilization differences
- erosion of state power: sub-state level entities or emerging supra-nation powers – international agreements, multilateral obligations – erosion of national borders and boundaries, regionalism, strengthening of local governments

Public policy formulation in trying times: globalization

- transformation of social relations – winners and losers
- world competition at the level of individuals
- international markets for human capital; brain drain
- different modes of expression of influences over decision making processes – new partnerships (e.g. NGO power)
- uncertainty regarding norms

Ethics and Good Governance

- The political space for political leaders has narrowed. The image competes with reality. Transparency is the norm but the media are feared
- The public servants are often in a fishbowls
- From rules and procedures to results and efficiency – a long way to go

Ethics and Good Governance

The 8 « rules » of public policies :

- political commitment
- legal framework
- accountability mechanisms
- codes of behaviour
- professional socialisation
- favourable work conditions
- ethical oversight
- engaged civil society

Example: Policy Making in Kenya

Type

Development

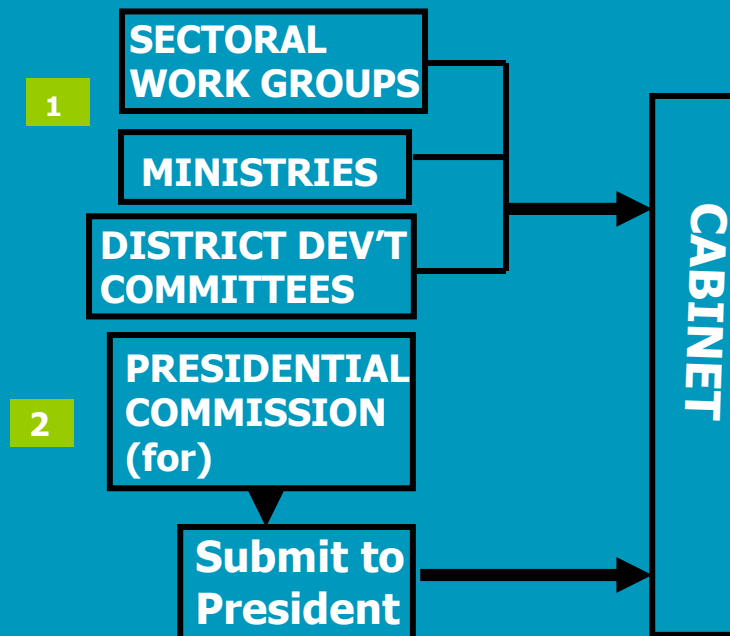
Purpose

Broad Statements

Examples:

National Development Plans,
master Plans, Sectoral Plans

Formulation
Process



Example: Policy Making in Kenya

Type

Regulation

Purpose

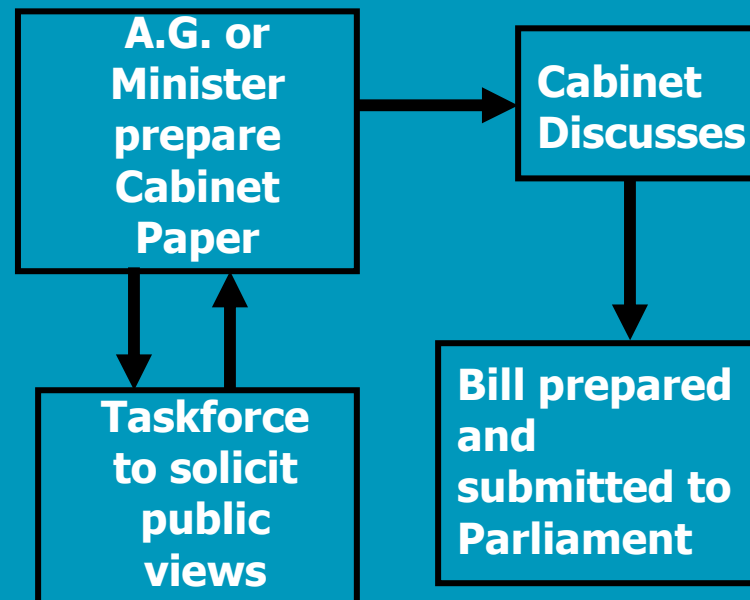
Controls Individual and institutional Behaviour

Examples:

Laws, Acts of Parliament, Sessional Papers

Formulation

Process



Policy Making

- Public policies come in different shapes – e.g. a law, poverty reduction strategy, statement by a government official, budget, programme or strategy. They are for example used to:

provide primary education	control inflation	prescribe how public officials should behave	regulate safe building methods	guide and manage donor relations
give people access to clean water	categorise and regulate medicines	protect children from abuse	combat the spread of HIV and AIDS	set development priorities
regulate foreign lending and borrowing	attract foreign investment	keep account of public finances	control pollution levels	coordinate public spending
provide support to farmers	promote equality and equity	coordinate different policies	regulate who has access to credit	advance cooperation with other countries
give roles and responsibilities to government officials	regulate imports and exports	procure goods and services	protect endangered species	combat corruption